

How Shall We Respond to Scripture?

Understanding Scripture

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For those of you that have been able to be with us over the past two days, you know that we've had a very full conference on understanding Scripture and looking at the clarity of Scripture and how we are to read and interpret Scripture and seeing many different things related to that. I wanted to kind of top off that subject matter with kind of a special message today, take a short break from the teaching from Ephesians in order to bring us to a final concluding question that relates not only to the past two days and what we've studied but really that relates to the entirety of what we do at Truth Community Church and exactly what it is that we're trying to produce in the lives of the people that would look to Truth Community Church as their church home or look to us in some manner for spiritual leadership. You know, on the last session last Saturday, yesterday, it's been a long weekend in some ways, we finished with giving some opportunities and some suggestions on how to read Scripture for yourself and to become a systematic reader of God's word and the thing that is really on my heart to say today and to kind of wrap that up with is to help you understand and to show you biblically the importance of something very important. We don't read Scripture simply to check off a box and say that we did. We don't go after God's word, we don't go into God's word with a purely academic interest or to be able to boast and say, "I read Scripture and someone else doesn't." That's utterly foreign to the spirit of the Bible.

Let me remind you of something that James says in James 1. You can turn there, although it won't be our text, but when there has been such a focus like we've had over the past couple of days on reading the word of God and interpreting it and bringing it into our hearts, it is vital and essential to help you remember that that's not an end goal in and of itself; that this is not like reading a novel or a book and then you put it on the shelf and you go away unchanged. The whole point of this is to help you understand and internalize God's word so that it changes your life. If there is not a life change that is produced in your life, then reading Scripture has not reached its goal. If you don't feel confronted in your sin, if you don't feel confronted to grow in Christ, to love him more, then you have completely missed the point and we could say that even about being here on a week by week, Sunday by Sunday basis. Unless you realize that this has authority over your life and has a changing influence on you, you're missing the most important point of them all. So we want to help you realize the scriptural importance of this and give you some leading from the Bible about how we should respond to the weekend that has just passed.

If you weren't able to be with us, we understand that, but I certainly encourage you to get those messages. Download them or get the cds and go through them carefully. What we looked at over the past two days is absolutely vital to everything and so I couldn't over-emphasize the importance of the themes that we discussed and I encourage you because they are foundational to the life of our church like very few things that we have done have been.

With those things said as we kind of turn our attention now to God's word and being mindful of what we've done this past weekend, look at James 1:19. James says, "This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God." What he's talking about in context there is to be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to react in anger against God's word when it comes and convicts you. That your mindset toward the word of God would be one who is receiving rather than quick to speak. Most of us have that tendency where we think we have two tongues and one ear instead of the reverse and we need to be mindful of that, that Scripture should make us sober; that it should make us serious minded; and that we should be mindful of our weakness and our tendency to speak foolishly; and that that would act as a restraint before we would respond to God's word.

Look at what he says as he goes on in verse 21. This is all by way of introduction. "Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does." So Scripture cautions us about the serious nature of coming to God's word. Scripture reminds us that we're not merely to read it as if it's some other book, but that our lives come under the authority – let me say that again – your life comes under the authority of God's word in a way that is not true of any other book that you read and that God's word when it speaks to you is calling you. It is commanding you. It is exercising authority over your soul and over your heart.

So we must be mindful of that and not detach our Bible reading, not detach our Bible study, not detach our Bible teaching, from the totality of life that we live. That is absolutely essential for you to understand. If that is not something that is ever immediate in your thinking, then you're really missing the point and today's message is designed to help you respond to Scripture and to answer one final question as we wrap up this little in-house conference: how shall we respond to Scripture? How is it? You should be asking yourself, "How is it that I respond to God's word? What should be the settled mindset of my heart as I read God's word, as I hear it proclaimed, as I study it with others?"

With that, I want you to go back to Psalm 19, the text that we read earlier in the service for our Scripture reading. We've studied this Psalm recently in the past. We've studied it in the more distant past, as well, and I just want to focus on one aspect of this Psalm to kind of help you have some direction for where you want to go from here. In this Psalm by way of quick review, in the first six verses, David describes and exalts the glories of God in creation and he responds to that about how God has made himself known in the heavens. Then he goes on in verses 7 through 11 and speaks about the more specific way that God has revealed himself in his word: it's perfect; it's true; it's right; and it has beneficial affects upon those who read it. Verse 7, it restores the soul; it makes wise the simple; it rejoices the heart; it enlightens the eyes; it is clean and righteous altogether; it is sweeter than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. Just a rich treasure that we have in God's word, far richer than finding a treasure chest full of ancient gold coins. This is the word of God, the Bible that you hold on your lap and that we proclaim here this morning.

You know, if I could do anything, if there could be anything that would be the mark of this church, I would have us and I see this developing in us and in your lives, that you would treasure God's word. That you would not only revere it and read it but that you would love it. That it would be the central affections of your heart because it is that precious, that sweet, more vital than your closest human relationship, the word of God is, because it's the word of God alone that points you to the Lord Jesus Christ who is the door to heaven, who is the door to the forgiveness of your sins, who is the way, the truth and the life. Apart from Scripture, we're in darkness. With the Scripture, we have the mind of God. So we thank God for that.

Today what I want to focus on is how David ends this Psalm as he shows us how the word should impact us. David isn't simply instructing us as a teacher to a student, this was his actual reaction to God's word, to God's revelation, and what we see here is a humility that is marked by the man who loves God's word and that's what we want to take a look at as we see how to respond to Scripture. David expresses three desires in these final three verses of the Psalm that will help you respond rightly to Scripture and I want you to see these things, I want you to take them to heart, and God would have you meditate and reflect and think not about the person next to you and say, "Oh, you know, Sam needs to hear this or Jill needs to really hear this. I'm glad she's here to hear this message." No, what I want you to be thinking is, "I'm glad that I'm here to hear this message," because God's word here is instructing and directing you in the way that your heart should be and what your attitude should be as an ongoing response to the word of God.

So what can we say about it? What should it provoke in you? Well, first of all, it should provoke in you a seeking of pardon for your sin. A seeking of pardon for your sin and what this passage teaches us is that we fall short of the glory of God without even knowing it. We fall short in ways that we don't even recognize and we tend to think as Christians, I think there's probably an unspoken assumption that the measure of our sinfulness sometimes is by what we know to confess or by what we actually confess and so we're mindful of, "I said a bad word here. I had a bad attitude there. Spoke wrongly to

my spouse here." You confess those things and it doesn't take a whole lot of time and you say, "Okay, well, I'm doing pretty good then." Well, beloved, that's a wrong way for us to think. We're a lot more sinful than we realize.

You fall short in a whole lot more ways than you're conscious of and David, as he writes this passage in response to the word of God, is mindful of that himself and he brings us to a very central and fundamental truth there in verse 12. Look at it with me. He says, "Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults." David says, "God, who can understand the ways in which he is spiritually deficient? How can I know? How can I really fully grasp all of the ways that I fall short of the perfection of your glory? How do I measure my wrong motivations? My speech that I say so thoughtlessly? How do I measure, Father, the lack of my earnestness in loving you with all of my heart, soul, strength and mind? How do I measure the fact that I fall short in loving my neighbor as myself? God, there is just so many ways. When I realize about what your perfection and what your word calls me to, I start to realize that there are so many ways in which I don't measure up to your holiness even though your word tells me to be perfect as you yourself are perfect."

So David is realizing that there is a measure of his sinfulness that he doesn't recognize and what is more, he understands that he is prone to self-deception and that is probably the biggest threat that each one of you have in here in this room is that you are prone to self-deception, to think that you are more godly than you actually are. Perhaps to think you're a Christian when you're not, even. And we're prone to congratulate ourselves because we're better than someone else without realizing that we fall short of who God is and who our Christ is. So David here is adopting a posture of humility in response to the word of God that says, "Lord, I'm sure I don't measure up in ways that I don't even understand."

Look at verse 12 with me again, "Who can discern his errors?" The anticipated answer is, "No one can." We don't even know the ways that we fall short of the glory of God. The best man among us does not see how sinful he is. He doesn't diagnose sin properly and therefore he is prone to think more highly of himself than he ought. Jeremiah 17:9 says, "The heart is deceitful above all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?" The commentator, Matthew Henry, said and I quote, he said, "We are guilty of many sins which through our carelessness and partiality to ourselves, we are not aware of. Many times we have been guilty of sins which we have now forgotten so that when we have been ever so particular in the confession of sin, we must conclude that God knows a great deal more evil of us than we do of ourselves."

So, beloved, here's what I want you to see: even when you are serious about dealing with sin in your life, even when you are watching guard over your soul, the concluding prayer of that spirit still is, "Lord, forgive me of hidden sin. God, there is bound to be more here than I recognize and so I appeal to your omniscience, I appeal to your grace and I ask you to acquit me of that which you see but I don't recognize." Then in humility, we respond to the word of God by recognizing that we need cleansing from sin; that we need him to acquit us of our faults, both known and unknown. We take the posture of one who is

responsible to God, who is humble before him because we're mindful that we're sinful in his presence. Do you know what's great about that spirit of going to God through Christ with that spirit? Do you know what's wonderful about that? It's that in response to that spirit, God doesn't respond and scold us; he doesn't chastise us when we come to him in humble repentance like what David is describing. God is actually willing and glad to answer that prayer out of his grace. Isn't that magnificent? 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

So we bring a portion of it and confess it and say, "Lord, here's what I'm mindful of. Here's what I'm conscious of and forgive me of all of the rest that I don't see," and Scripture responds and says, "That's exactly what God does. That's exactly why Christ died for you." It's exactly why he shed his blood on the cross was so that you might be washed completely from all of your sin and that you might be able to walk forward in life having risen from your knees, as it were, and confessing that sin and going forward with a sense that things are fully reconciled between you and God and you can go forward with a clear conscience, confident of his favor and blessing being upon you. That's the proper response to Scripture: you humble yourself before him; you confess sin; you trust him to honor his promise to forgive; and then you move forward with a clear mind, with serenity deeply embedded in your heart because of the reconciling work of Jesus Christ on your behalf. It's wonderful, isn't it?

Beloved, David's prayer here can reawaken your desire for pardon from sin. Reacquaint you with the ongoing responsibility that is ours to confess our sins before the Lord. Even as believers to say, "Lord, forgive me for that." You know, there have been teachers in the past who don't deserve the monicker of Bible teacher applied to them who have taught Christians that you don't need to confess sin even as a believer in Christ. That's utterly false and that is very wicked teaching because what that does is it hardens the conscience against God and says, "I can sin with impunity and I don't have to humble myself," and it just makes somebody very hard in sin while claiming to be a godly Christian. We reject that. Don't you fall into that error either in your thinking or in your practice. We walk with humility before God and when we violate his word and when our lives are not what they should be, we need to go to him and humbly confess that as a true response to the word of God. So we're not here to cover our sin, we're here to uncover it and to expose it in the presence of God and deal with it honestly. That's the only right thing to do. That's the only right response to the word of God.

Now, as David goes on in this portion of Scripture, he does more than seek pardon for his past sins, he goes on and he seeks protection from future sin. He seeks protection from future sin. In verse 12, David looks to the past and he says, "Acquit me of hidden faults. The things that mark me now. The things that I've done in the past that I'm no aware of." But he changes focus. He pivots as he moves forward in verse 13 and watch this, watch what he does, he now looks to the future and he prays proactively in his pursuit of holiness.

Look at verse 13 with me, he says, "Also." He says, "I'm not done dealing with sin here, Lord. As part of my response to God's word, I'm not just going to rush through confession and examining myself in your presence so that I can get to what I want." He deals with it so thoroughly, so thoughtfully, so comprehensively. In verse 13 he says, "Also," in addition to what I just confessed, "Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins; Let them not rule over me." That word "presumptuous" that he uses here describes a defiant attitude that says, "I'll do what I want." It is the spirit that takes liberties with the grace of God and that becomes self-assertive; that becomes indifferent to what the call of God and the commands of God on your heart and soul and mouth would be and says, "I'm going to do what I want." David says, "God, I don't want that spirit anywhere near my heart. As I reflect on the greatness of your glory and creation, as I see the wonders of the way that you have displayed yourself in your word, the last thing that I want, Father, one of the great spiritual priorities of my heart, is that my spirit would be compliant before you as I walk in this life." David says, "God, guard me. Protect me. Help me so that I would not have that self-assertive, independent, defiant spirit against you but rather that my heart would be conformed to your will." He says, "Hold me back." He says, "Lord, whatever you do, whatever it takes in the power of your providence, in your work in my heart, whatever is necessary, Father, hold me back. Restrain me so that I don't go into that realm. I don't want to be like that. I don't want to be a bossy, assertive person like that in your presence. I want to line up under you, not in opposition to you. I want to remember you, not forget you. I want to be under the influence of your Spirit. I want your word to be guiding the kind of person that I am rather than the selfish, sinful impulses of my heart." You see, what David is praying about here is he's saying, "God, shape my character. Make me into a particular kind of person." He's not simply confessing individual sins here, he's thinking about the whole way that his character is in the presence of God in response to God's word. "Don't let me resist your will, O God."

Now, here's a question. If you read that and think about it at all, sooner or later you come to this point and ask this question: is a prayer like that really necessary for a man who loves God? Is it necessary to look ahead and to pray that way if you're already in a compliant spirit, you're already of a mindset that you're confessing sin and saying, "God, acquit me of hidden faults"? Is it necessary to take this other step or is David just kind of being extravagant and unnecessary in his heart affections? Is that prayer necessary as a response to Scripture? Yes. Absolutely. If you know anything about your inner man, you know that that's true. You see, David knew that while he was presently submissive as he was writing this Psalm, he knew that there were strands of wickedness, there were seeds of evil in his heart just like there are in each one of yours, that could motivate him to sin against God in the future even though at the moment he is submitting himself to God. He understands he's not yet perfected. He understands he's not yet glorified. So while his spirit, while his heart, while his thinking, while his mind is engaged and captivated by the word of God and the glory of God and he says, "Lord, I submit myself to you in this moment," here's what he does – watch this, truly strategic – he takes advantage of his present godly frame of mind in order to set the stage for his future holiness. He's not just living in the moment, he's thinking ahead. He's guarding against the wickedness of his heart by asking God to help him in the future.

You see, what David didn't do was he did not overestimate his own spirituality. He was humbled enough before the presence of God to say, "Lord, I put no trust," - watch this – "I put no trust in my present state of mind. The fact that my affections are flowing toward you now is now guarantee of the future." Stockbrokers understand that, don't they? Past results are no guarantee of future performance. Well, in the same way, you need to be thinking this way, I need to be thinking this way, every one of you needs to be thinking this way. Even if you've been a good Christian up to this point and you've been living a godly life and you're pursuing God and you're growing in sanctification, praise God for that, but have the wisdom not to trust in yourself, not to boast in that, and to assume that you'll always be like that. Understand that the capacity for future sin is still resident in your heart and love the word of God and love the holiness of God enough and take the time to say, "O God, I love you now. I'm no longer conscious of any sin that is unconfessed but I know that there is still wickedness in me and, God, I pray against that wickedness and I ask you to restrain me so that I would continue to walk in your presence in submission to you," rather than assuming that you'll always be that way. David here rejects the temptation to trust in himself and says, "God, help me in the future as well." Charles Spurgeon said this about this verse and I quote, he says, "This earnest and humble prayer teaches us that saints may fall into the worst of sins unless restrained by grace and therefore they must watch and pray lest they enter into temptation."

Look at verse 13 again. Having prayed that way, David says, "Then I will be blameless, And I shall be acquitted of great transgression." Let me say that again, "Then I will be blameless, And I shall be acquitted of great transgression." David says, "God, if you've cleanse me of my present and past sins now and if you guard me from sin going into the future, then I know that I can be blameless before you." Not sinless in the sense of merit or anything like that, but that he could be living in a way that was pleasing to God as a man after God's own heart. If God would work in that way in his heart and restrain him from future sin, David would be complete in his presence.

What is that you should want as a Christian? One of the central things in your heart going forward from this moment as you're sitting here as you look forward out on your life and where it goes here from now, maybe some of you realizing you've been unfaithful to God, you've been an irritable, argumentative influence in your household and you're mindful of the fact that that's not right, well, you need to feel the weight of the conviction of that, not just kind of brush it off and say, "Well, that's just the way I am." Well, just the way you are might just be displeasing to God and realize that you need to change. Going forward from this moment, your heart attitude should be, "God, I want you to protect me from temptation. I want you to keep me in holiness. That's the most important thing, Father. When I remember your glory and creation, when I see how you have revealed yourself in your word, now on the other side of the cross, I remember my Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, O God, the last thing that I want in my life is any remnant viable that would lead me into temptation, that would move me into sin, that would express defiance to you in light of your glory and your grace. That would just not be right, Lord." You need to settle that conviction rather than calling a truce with your sin and saying, "Okay, I'll accommodate this and I'm not going to deal seriously with the sin in my life." No, that's just not right. Do you understand that? It's just not right for you to be that way to

accept sin in your life. The people perhaps have pointed out to you again and again and you just continue on and you refuse any correction, young people. No, that's just not right. What your desire should be under the influence of the word of God is to say, "God, what I want is I want a compliant heart before you and I want to grow in holiness." That's the way we respond to God's word.

That's the way and direction that Scripture points us and that spirit runs throughout the Bible. Look over at Matthew 6. I want to reinforce this in your mind, this spirit of anticipating sin and asking God to deliver you from sin before it even happens. Matthew 6:12. Jesus taught us to pray, "Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name." Verse 12, "forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And," you see, the forgive us our debts, "forgive the existing deficiencies that I have before you, O God," and then Jesus says, "Look to the future." Verse 13, "And do not lead us into temptation." As we go from this point forward, Father, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." He says, "So going forward, Lord, I do not want to go into temptation, rather I want you to order my steps by your providence so that I am led into a life of obedience to you. Lord, direct my steps. Providentially hinder me from going into those realms where I would be tempted to sin and instead, Father, deliver me from it. Deliver me from the realm of Satan, the influence of demons, from the unrighteousness that is in my own heart. Deliver me from all of that, Father. Why? So that I might be blameless before you. So that I might walk complete before you. That I might respond to you in a way of which you're worthy. You who are hallowed; you whose kingdom is coming; you whose will should be done. Lord, I want to be in compliance with you. I want to be in submission to you. I want all of my heart affections to be in complete sympathy with you with no countervailing force having power in my heart." That's a proper response to God's word and it's character shaping. It forms fundamental aspects of who you are, not just a superficial thing for the day. This is pointing us to the way that we should be, not simply what we should do but what we should be in the presence of God.

Well, there is one final aspect of it here. We've seen David ask for pardon for past sin. He seeks protection from future sin. Finally he asks for purity in God's presence. He asks for purity in God's presence. God's knowledge is pervasive. Our secrets are open before him. Our inner man is subject to his examination and what David does here in verse 14 is he takes his whole inner man and he lays it, as it were, on the altar of God and says, "God, here is my sacrifice before you. Here is what I give to you, Father."

Verse 14, look at it with me, he says, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer." What is David doing here? He is praying that his inner man would honor the Lord. He's praying that the very way that he thinks would be pleasing to God. There is a lot wrapped up in that, isn't there? That, "Lord, that my thoughts would be true. That what I think about you and what I think about myself would be aligned with the truth of your word that you have revealed. I want my thoughts to be true, Lord, because I know that would be pleasing to you. I want my desires and my impulses to be toward righteousness and holiness rather than toward sin and this world. I want my affections to align with the people of God rather than desiring the wickedness of the people that are around me that don't know you.

I don't want to want the same things that an unsaved man wants because, Father, he doesn't even seek after you. I'm seeking after you, God, and so I want the totality, all of the different impulses of my heart, I want every one of them to be that which you could look upon and be pleased and say, 'That's the way it should be.'"

There is something that always strikes me about this Psalm. Look back at verse 1. The comprehensive thought of this Psalm is astounding. He opens up in verse 1 on a macro scale saying, "The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands." He looks out and, as it were, he peers through the spiritual Hubble telescope and he looks into the deep recesses of the skies and the creation and he gives glory to God for the way that he has displayed himself like that and says, "God, your glory is on display there." And as you work through the Psalm and you get down toward the final words that he says here, he has gone from macro to micro. He's gone from outside to inside. He says, "God, your glory is displayed in the heavens. I want it displayed in my heart. I want it displayed in the person that I am."

That's how much he desired purity and do you know what? That's true righteousness. That's a glorious transformation. When you understand and embrace the fact that God is not simply looking at you like men do, that God is not simply looking at your outer conduct and as long as the good church people look at you and think that you're doing okay that you're alright. That's not true. God's after an inner transformation. He's after your inner man. Your inner affections and the way that you think belong to him and are under his authority. You have an obligation of loyalty for your inner man to belong to God in a loving, submissive, affectionate way and David says, "Lord, that's the kind of person that I want to be. I want the very way that I think to be pleasing to you. I want the things that I feel to be right in your presence. I want the things that motivate me in life to be that which you would look on and say, 'That's good. That's what I want out of my children. There is someone who is reflecting the image of my Son.'"

That's it. That's the proper response to the word of God is when you recognize that your inner man is a place of worship before a holy God and it's from that inner man, that transformed mind, that transformed affection, it's there that come forth fitting words of praise. It's from that that flows the issues of life, that you guard your heart so that your heart is directing you in the ways that would be pleasing to this God who has revealed himself. What should your response be to God's word? Your response to God's word should be that you have a desire, a comprehensive, complete desire to please him with the purity of your life. That is the only proper response to this holy God.

Hebrews 13:15 says this, "Through Christ then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name." In an epistle that was all about the superiority of Christ in the book of Hebrews, it comes down to this, saying through this Christ then, here's our response. Here's our response: we offer up continually as a mark of character, as a mark of the settled affections of your heart, "I'm going to be a man who praises God. I'm going to be a man who gives thanks to God. I'm going to be a woman who devotes my energies and affections to being a woman of God that reflects what he would have me to be, and that he would find in my heart a bundle of affections

and emotions, of intentions and right thinking that is all designed to reflect back on his holiness with purity that he finds pleasing and a heart that is full of gratitude that he has made himself known in creation. That he has made himself known in the Scriptures. He has made himself known in Christ. He has made himself known in my conscience. He has made himself known in my very conversion. He's made himself known in the church. All these great ways that God has made himself known." And you think this way, you say, "He's made himself known so comprehensively from the greatest skies to the jot and tittle and Scripture," you say, "well then, if he has revealed himself so comprehensively like that, then do you know what he's going to get from me?" You say to yourself, "What he's going to get from me is he's going to get my all. He's going to get a comprehensive response from me." Not cherishing sin. Not holding things on that I want to keep, but that there would be a total, unconditional, complete repentance from sin in your life that gives yourself unconditionally to Christ. That's the only thing that's right. Anything less, let's put it this way, for you to be satisfied with anything less than that kind of complete self-response to God is not right. That's not worthy of a God who has done so much for us in Christ and in his word. Continual offer of sacrifice, the fruit of lips that give thanks to his name.

Now, as we say that and even as David said it, he says this not with a spirit of boasting. He says it in a spirit of trust, a spirit of expectant trust, of reliance on the goodness of God rather than a reliance on self and his own self-effort. Look, let's just be honest with each other: haven't you and I both had enough? Haven't you had enough failure in saying, "I'm going to be this kind of person now," and you go out and you stumble on the drive home. For some of you that's pretty hard because you've got a short drive in five minutes. You know, I don't know how that happens. But haven't you had enough of making these grandiose declarations about what you're going to be and then you go out and stumble on it later? You know what that's like. David here isn't asserting his desires for purity in that spirit.

Here's the spirit in which you offer that up, where you offer that desire to God. Look at verse 14 with me again. He says, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD," Yahweh, my God of faithful love, my covenant keeping God, my promise keeping God. Lord, I offer that up to you because you keep your promises. Because you're a covenant keeping God, not because I'm someone great in myself. "My rock." He offers up this spirit with a metaphor of complete trust that, "You are the refuge. You are what I cling to. You are the foundation stone that I lay hold of as I express these desires, Lord. I trust not in myself that I can be this way. Oh, it's where I want to go but, Father, the ultimate fulfillment must come from you. You must help me be like that." Yahweh is reliable. He is a sure source of strength to David because he is his rock. He is his promise keeping God.

Don't miss those closing words at the end there either, "O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer." Redeemer being a word that speaks of God as his deliverer. God is the one – watch this – God is the one who delivers his people from bondage. He redeemed the people of Israel from Egypt. He redeemed them from slavery. He has the power to bring us out from foreign hostile powers that are over us and bring us into the place of his

blessing where he has appointed us to be. And what David is saying here, he's speaking in a spiritual sense, right? You get this? This is really, really important for you to see. He's not talking about a physical deliverance when he talks about Yahweh as his Redeemer because the whole context, remember context from this past weekend? You do, don't you? Good. The whole context is confession of sin, "Lord, deliver me from temptation. Lead me in the right way to go." So spiritually and he says, "Lord, I offer up my inner man as an altar of worship to you." So this is his inner man responding, not asking for physical deliverance here at the end. He says, "Lord, I offer up this prayer to you in trust for who you are, my rock and my defense and my Redeemer. Lord, you have the power to deliver me even from the sinful impulses of my own heart. You can lift me beyond those. You have the supernatural ability to free me from the shackles of my own sin so that I could become that which I have asked you to make me, my rock and my Redeemer." He is trusting God to deliver him from the power of sin so that he could worship acceptably in the presence of God.

You know, as you read Scripture and as you study Scripture, you realize that it beckons you, it calls you, it illustrates for you a profound response, doesn't it? These aren't superficial emotions that David is expressing as if he had heard a catchy Christian tune on Radio Israel and he's just responding in emotion to a musical impulse. His whole inner man is engaged and, you see, what I want you to see is that that's the illustration and that's the example for you as well. That your whole inner man would be engaged. That you would think through life and say, "Okay, my whole life belongs to this one."

And David's prayer here foreshadows even the reality of New Testament salvation. You were in bondage to sin. You were under a curse, the curse of God that comes upon those who disobey his law. And what did Christ do? Christ came and Christ redeemed us. Christ redeemed us from that power with his death on the cross. Galatians 3:13 says, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us." And the fulfillment of God being David's Redeemer was so much greater than what David must have understood in the shadows of the Old Testament. The redemption of God was so complete and the way that God answered this Old Testament prayer was so profound that he entered into human flesh and went to a cross to make sure that that redemption would be accomplished. Redemption in Christ has freed you from sin. From the penalty of sin and it has broken the power of sin in your life so that you can belong to God. You can belong to Christ and live a life at a profound depth that is devoted to his glory. Here in the New Testament we see that the death and resurrection of Christ are the basis on which God releases us from sin, redeems us from sin, breaks its power so that you can become this kind of person that Psalm 19 has illustrated you to be. Beloved, that's how God's word blesses us.

Why have we spent so much time over the past two day trying to understand why we can understand Scripture and the kind of person that we need to be to understand Scripture and how we shall interpret Scripture and how do we get started? Why do we go to all of that trouble? Why so many hours on that one theme? Why so much? Why? Does the question even need to be asked? Why would we do it? Because how many times do we have to say it? Because this word is precious. Because the Lord Jesus Christ to whom it

testifies is precious. Because he died for you. He rose again for you to save you from sin and to secure for you an eternal glory that you didn't deserve and that's precious. That's awesome. That's glorious. It's undeserved. It's gracious. It's merciful. It's kind. Well, if God has done all of that and has recorded it for us in Scripture, then isn't it the least that we can do? If Christ gave his all like that for us, isn't the least that we can do is to give our all in return in our inner man? Is there any one of you that would want to argue that that's not necessary? That it would be right to be any other way? Who wants to make that case in the presence of a holy God? Not me and I know not you.

Psalm 19 has pointed you to how your soul was restored and says this is the way forward in living a life that responds in a manner that glorifies him. Won't you settle it in your heart afresh? Won't you renew your desire? Won't you renew your commitment as we close here to say, "Yes, that's the kind of person I'm going to be"?

Let's bow together in prayer and I want to give you a moment to just respond to what we've seen in Psalm 19. This will be a little bit, we'll take just a little bit of extended time here to help you respond and not just rush into the next part of the service. David showed us to pray for pardon for our past sins. Do you know what? Take a few moments now and just confess sin in response to God's word. Understand that you do fall short. God has graciously given you a few quiet moments in the presence of Christ and in the presence of his word to confess things and to straighten out those wrong areas of your life before him. Take a moment to do that just now.

We've seen from God's word here to ask God to lead us not into temptation but to deliver us from evil. Isn't it your desire for God to work in your heart to direct you away from sin and toward greater personal holiness? Well, take a moment to ask him to do just that. He is eager to answer that sincere prayer from your heart.

Won't you just now, without reservation, without trying to hold onto anything else, won't you just gather up your whole inner man and offer it to God as David did? "Let the meditations of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart be pleasing to you. The words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing to you." Won't you ask God to make you a person like that going forward?

Father, hear the collective prayers of your people as we respond to your word. Do indeed, Father, forgive us of our past sins and for that one that's here today that does not know Christ at all, who carries the full weight of completely unforgiven sin, may this be their moment of conversion as they repentantly turn to you and say, "O God, I'm so sorry. I know what I've been inside. I forsake it all in order to receive Christ." Forgive even such a one as that.

Father, for those of us that are Christians, wash us, cleanse us from our sins. Be faithful to your word that you forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Lord, we thank you for the shed blood of Jesus Christ upon which we can make that appeal. The perfect sacrifice. The name of Jesus, the sinner's perfect plea. It's our plea too, Lord, and we ask you, Lord, to make us not only individually but corporately make us a church

where your name is revered, where your word is properly honored. Not only in words that come from a pulpit but in lives that come from those who identify with our church.

Father, may you so work in other churches throughout this land here today that your Spirit would move through other preachers of the word of God and the hearts of other believers in other places to sanctify them and to make for yourself a people that love you and respond to you in a way of which your creation, your Christ and your word are so preeminently worthy. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.